

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to honor milestone events in the
4 lives of the citizens of the State of Illinois; and

5 WHEREAS, AMBUCS will honor Harold "Sparky" Songer with
6 its 68th annual First Citizen award at a reception and
7 banquet on February 27, 2001; the award recognizes an area
8 resident for outstanding community service or a significant
9 contribution to the area; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Songer is credited with taking the dream of
11 preserving the Danville area's military history at the
12 Carnegie Building and making it a reality through the
13 establishment of the Vermilion County War Museum; and

14 WHEREAS, Harold Songer was born in Veedersburg, Indiana;
15 he left high school to go to work at Wright-Patterson Air
16 Force Base a year and a half after the United States entered
17 World War II; as soon as he turn 18 years of age, he joined
18 the United States Army; in 1944, as a private first class in
19 the 106th Infantry Division, he was sent to the front line
20 near St. Vith, Belgium and ten days later he was captured by
21 the German troops during the Battle of the Bulge; and

22 WHEREAS, Harold Songer was sent to the Stalag 4B
23 prisoner-of-war camp near Berlin, Germany, then later
24 transferred to the Stalag 4A camp near Dresden, Germany,
25 where he was held for six months until the war ended; after
26 the war, he went back to Indiana and opened a
27 restaurant/service station with his older brother; by 1951 he
28 had re-enlisted, this time with the United States Air Force,
29 and loyally served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars; he retired
30 in August 1971 with the rank of master sergeant; and

31 WHEREAS, Harold Songer became involved with the efforts

1 to create the Vermilion County War Museum in 1998; he worked
2 tirelessly to make the museum one of the best presentations of
3 war memorabilia in the country; he was able to secure a
4 vintage building and organized a fleet of volunteers to
5 accomplish this task with very little funding; since its
6 opening on Veterans Day 1999, over four thousand people from
7 39 states and 10 countries, including Germany, Japan, Sweden,
8 and Australia, have visited; and

9 WHEREAS, In addition to his work at the museum, Harold
10 Songer was active in helping raise money for three monuments
11 honoring veterans: the Korean-Vietnam monument, the World War
12 II monument, and the womens veterans monument are all on the
13 Kenneth Bailey Drive section of North Hazel Street in
14 Danville, Illinois; and

15 WHEREAS, Harold Songer became involved in the Vermilion
16 County War Museum project and memorials because he doesn't
17 want anyone to forget the efforts of his fellow veterans who
18 fought for the sake of our country; the museum is dedicated
19 for veterans to reminisce about their war experiences and for
20 the school children to learn about our history and the
21 sacrifices of our veterans to preserve the nation; therefore,
22 be it

23 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
24 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
25 we congratulate Harold Songer for his dedicated efforts in
26 helping establish the Vermilion County War Museum and for
27 being honored by AMBUCS with its annual First Citizen award
28 for his services; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
30 presented to Harold Songer as an expression of our esteem.